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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 000008

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SA](#) [PK](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: MOI TO SPECIAL ADVISOR TO SRAP: TALIBAN
REINTEGRATION COULD WORK

REF: RIYADH 1639

Classified By: Ambassador James B. Smith for
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

SUMMARY:

11. (C) During a meeting on December 15, Dr. Barnett Rubin, Special Advisor to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, briefed Major General Dr. Saad al-Jabri, Special Advisor to the Assistant Minister of the Interior for Security Affairs, on the current U.S. thinking about Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al-Jabri was open to the idea of Taliban reintegration programs in Afghanistan, but cautioned that they would only succeed in a secure and stable environment. In addition, he suggested the possibility of utilizing the Hajj and Umra as a way to facilitate the reintegration and reconciliation process. He praised the President's recent speech on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and acknowledged the difficulty of stopping Taliban financing in the Gulf. End Summary.

A GOOD IDEA, BUT THE WRONG TIME

12. (C) Rubin noted that the close-knit tribal and family relationships in Afghanistan were, in some ways, similar to those in the KSA. Perhaps, he suggested, an extremist reintegration program, much like the care-centers for those with extremist ideologies in the KSA, could be established in Afghanistan to reintegrate Taliban members back into their communities. Al-Jabri agreed that something like this would be possible in Afghanistan, but cautioned that the time for reintegration was only after the conflict has been brought under control. While the extremists have popular support, it was very difficult to involve the family, tribe or community in the process of reintegration. The reason the SAG has been successful in its reintegration efforts was because it didn't start its program until the internal security situation was well in hand and Saudi leaders were sure to have the support of the general population.

13. (C) While agreeing with Al-Jabri about the need for security, Rubin pointed out that some parts of Afghanistan were in fact relatively secure. Reintegration programs could be started in the more secure parts of the country, rather than waiting for the whole region to stop fighting. Al-Jabri again agreed that this was possible and said the SAG would be happy to help with the process when the time comes. "Of course we wish to help. It is an opportunity for these poor guys to rebuild their lives and join society."

A PILGRIMAGE TO LEARN "CORRECT" ISLAM

¶4. (C) "Thinking out loud," al-Jabri suggested the possibility that the SAG could sponsor trips for the Hajj or Umra for former Taliban or other militia members. These visits would be an enticement for fighters to renounce violence, and could also be a chance for some of the uneducated fighters to learn about the "correct form of Islam" from SAG approved clerics and scholars in Mecca.

THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH CLOSELY WATCHED

¶5. (C) Al-Jabri responded positively to the President's December 1 speech on Afghanistan and Pakistan, adding that it was closely watched in the KSA. He suggested the Taliban was trying to portray the new U.S. strategy as a sign of weakness, but he was glad to hear that the U.S. supported more than just a military approach to Afghanistan. "The King strongly believes that there is no military solution to this problem. And stabilization will help us all."

TALIBAN FINANCING STILL A PROBLEM

¶6. (C) Rubin mentioned that the USG is still concerned about the Taliban's ability to raise funds in the Gulf. Al-Jabri

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acknowledged that some Gulf money was making its way to the Taliban, but said the SAG had been active in trying to stop this. While admitting he was no expert in the area of financial investigations, al-Jabri said measures had been enacted to stop illegal fundraising. He suggested that a more detailed discussion could be held with finance experts.

¶7. (U) Special Advisor to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Dr. Barnett Rubin, has cleared this message.

SMITH